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CONTACT: Hannah Heller
Sunny Hills Services
415-457-3200 x116
hheller@sunnyhillsservices.org

Hamilton Ink
415-381-8198
pam@hamiltoninkpr.com

SUNNY HILLS SERVICES ANNOUNCES PROGRAM DEVELOPMENTS

San Anselmo, Calif. (February 4, 2008) – Joseph M. Costa, Chief Executive Officer of Sunny Hills Services, has announced the expansion of the agency's existing community based programs and effective June 2008, the closure of the agency's current residential program in San Anselmo.

"National and state-wide trends over the last decade have encouraged the development of community based programs to serve children who in a previous generation would have been served in residential programs," said Costa. "As a result Sunny Hills has developed an array of community based programs in both Marin and Sonoma Counties that currently serve well over 500 children and their families each year. As these programs have addressed effectively the needs of children with a variety of emotional disturbances the demand for residential treatment programs has weakened significantly, especially here in Marin where very few children require treatment in what is called a congregate care setting. Community based programs are preferred in most cases because children and their families are spared the trauma of being separated. For children in community-based care, familial and community ties are able to be maintained, providing a supportive setting for treatment. As a result of this shift from congregate to community-based care, many agencies like Sunny Hills have reduced or eliminated residential programs in favor of developing community based programs that will better meet the needs of their target populations. During our 113-year history, we have always been responsive to needs of the children and families we serve and changes in the field of child welfare. From our roots as an orphanage to our development of therapeutic residential services to our expansion into community-based care, Sunny Hills has always delivered the services that vulnerable children in our community need. This transition is in line with the previous shifts that the agency has made in the methods of service delivery. We anticipate that through these program transitions we will be able to serve more children each year than ever before."

When Sunny Hills' leadership team first began to see a decrease in demand for its residential treatment programs, the agency's Board of Directors engaged in a three-year strategic planning process that has identified an alternative use for the agency's main San Anselmo campus. Concurrently, the agency has further developed its array of community based programs for children with severe emotional disturbances. Sunny Hills began offering community-based services over a decade ago and now has multiple thriving community based programs throughout Marin and Sonoma counties. Marin-based programs include the Marin Academic Center, Hamilton Transitional Housing, Grant Grover and Braun Day Treatment School Programs, and Therapeutic Behavioral Services, as well as the presence of Intervention Specialists in several Marin public schools. Sonoma-based programs include the Kinship Family Center, the FASST(Family Advocacy Support and Stabilization Team) program, the new ACT program which provides services to mentally ill juvenile justice youth, and the new Community Engagement and Youth Development program for youth at risk for gang involvement, which provides training and community building to solve problems related to youth violence, as well as direct services. Sunny Hills programs in Sonoma served 275 children and their families in 2007.

Sunny Hills will continue providing its current array of community-based programs and has plans to further expand them as part of its commitment to provide better and brighter futures for all the children it serves. "With these programs, we will be able to increase the number of children we serve from 675 a year today to close to 1000 within three years," said Costa.

When Sunny Hills' existing residential program closes in June, the majority of the children in the program will be restored to their families and communities. Each of the children in that program will be transitioned to the care setting that will meet their needs in the best possible way. Currently none of the 37 children in residential treatment at Sunny Hills are from Marin County.

Sunny Hills is working on plans to convert part of the residential treatment campus on Sunny Hills Drive to the Red Hill Academy, a new therapeutic day and boarding school program designed to serve high-school age students with learning challenges, and the emotional difficulties that often accompany those challenges. Red Hill Academy will be a program of Sunny Hills Services.

Sunny Hills Services is a Marin-based non-profit that was founded in 1895. Today the agency serves over 600 vulnerable children each year through educational, community-based, residential and mental health programs throughout the Bay Area and Northern California. The clients that Sunny Hills serves have a diverse array of emotional, behavioral and social problems, and the agency's mission is to assess, treat and heal them. For more information about the programs of Sunny Hills Services, please contact Joseph M. Costa, Chief Executive Officer, at 415-457-3200 x119 or jcosta@sunnyhillsservices.org, or visit the agency's website, www.sunnyhillsservices.org